Otway

PROLOGUE

To a New PLAY, called

Venice Preserv'd;

OR

THE PLOT DISCOVERED.

At the Duke's Theatre, Spoken by Mr. SMITH.

IN these unsettl'd Times, when each man dreads
The Bloody Stratagems of busie Heads,
When we have fear'd three years I know not what,
Till Witnesses begin to die o'th' Root,
What made our Poet meddle with a *Plot?*
Was't that he fanci'd, for the very sake
And name of Plot, his trifling Play might take?
For there's not in't one Inch-board-evidence;
But is to each man's reason plain and sense:
And that he thinks a plausible defence.
Were Truth by Sense and Reason to be try'd,
Sure all our Swearers might be laid aside:
No, of such Tools our Author has no need,
To make his Plot, or make his Play succeed.
He of Black-Bills has no prodigious Tales,
Of *Spanish-pilgrims* thrown ashoar in *Wales.*
Here's not one murdr'd Magistrate, at least
Kept rank, like Ven'son, for a City-feast:
Grown four dayes stiff, the better to prepare
And fit his plyant Limbs to ride in Chair,
Here are no Truths of such a Monstrous stature,
And some believe there are none such in Nature.
But here's an Army rais'd, though under ground,
Yet no Men seen, nor one Commission found.
Here is a Traitor too, that's very old,
Turbulent, subtile, mischeivous and bold,
Bloody, Revengeful; and to Crown his Part,
Loves fumbling with a Wench with all his heart,
And after having many Changes past,
In spight of Age, thanks Heav'n he's Hang'd at last.
Next, here's a Senator that keeps a Whore:
In *Venice* none a higher Office bore:
To Lewdness every night the Leacher ran:
Shew me in *London* such another man:
Match him at Mother *Cresswels* if you can:
Ah *Poland*, *Poland*, had it been thy Lot
To have heard in time of this *Venetian-Plot*,
Thou surely chosen hadst one Plot from thence,
And honour'd Them, as thou hast *England* since.

EPI-

EPILOGUE
to the ſame.

Spoken by Mr. *BETTERTON.*

THe Text is done, and now for Application:
And when that's ended, give your Approbation.
Tho' the Conſpiracy's prevented Here,
Methinks I ſee another Hatching There.
And there's a certain Faction fain would ſway,
If they had ſtrength enough, and damn this Play;
But this the Author boldly bad me ſay.
If any take his plainneſs in ill part,
He's glad on't from the bottom of his Heart.
Poets in honour of the Truth ſhould Write,
With the ſame Courage Brave Men for it Fight.
And tho' againſt him cauſeleſs hatred riſe,
And dayly where he goes of late he ſpies
The Frowns of ſullen and revengeful Eyes.
'Tis what he knows, with much contempt, to bear,
And ſerves a Cauſe to good to let him fear.
He fears no Poyſon from an incens'd Drab,
No Ruffians five foot *Sword*, nor Raſcals Stab:
Nor any other Snares of Miſchief, laid,
Not a *Roſe-Ally*, Cudgel, Ambuſcade.
From any private Cauſe where Malice Reigns,
Or general Pique, that Blockheads have to Brains.
Nothing ſhall daunt his Pen when Truth doth call,
No, not the Picture-Mangler at *Guild-hall.*
The Rebel Tribe (of which that Vermin's one)
Have now ſet forward, and the Courſe begun.
And while that Prince's Figure they deface,
Durſt their baſe Fears but look him in the Face,
As they before had Maſſacred His Name,
They'd uſe His Perſon as they've us'd his Fame.
A Face, in which ſuch Lineaments they Read,
Of that Great Martyr, whoſe Rich Blood they Shed,
That their Rebellious Hate they ſtill maintain,
And, in his Son, would Murder Him again.
With Indignation then let each brave Heart,
Rowze and Unite to take His Injur'd Part,
Till Royal Love and Goodneſs call Him Home,
And Songs of Triumph meet Him as He come.
Till Heaven His Honour and His Peace Reſtore,
And Villains never wrong His Vertue more.

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